

The **FuturE**
IS

Perfected! *continuing
constantly*

Fresh and Relaxed

TANTALIZING **A PAIN IN THE NECK**

the World's Greatest Industry

so simple

mistaken?

the JOURNEY'S END

Busy **Men**

EVEN FINER THAN THE NAME IMPLIES

All this,



art_irl

"the future"

summer /

8.19.2023 +

8.26.2023

r chou

g cullen

j dotson [p. 9]

j eppes

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y fahmy [p. 13–14]

o guarnieri [p. 8]

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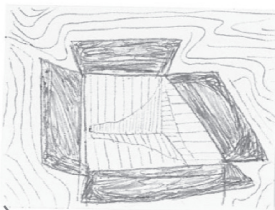
If nothing else, what I'd like this little experiment in historical writing to bring home is that existing history is not just deeply flawed and Eurocentric, it's also unnecessarily tedious and boring. There is a surreptitious pleasure in moralism, yes, just as there is a kind of mathematical glee to be found in reducing all human action to self-aggrandizing calculation. But these are ultimately tawdry pleasures. The real story of what happened in human history is a thousand times more diverting.

JULIA EPPES



**the future
is a minefield of potential
regrets,
an unburnt candle
melted in the heat.**

FUTURE IS THE FUTURE PAST



THAT WAS THE FUTURE



The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com> » live » 2023/06/29 » affirmati...

Supreme Court Rejects Affirmative Action at U.S. Colleges

20 hours ago — Race-conscious admissions programs at Harvard and the University of North Carolina are unconstitutional, the Supreme Court ruled on Thursday ...

Supreme Court of the United States

Human Rights

Civil Rights

Appellate

Public Policy

US Supreme Court deals blow to LGBT rights in web designer case

Supreme Court kills Biden student loan relief plan

The justices ruled in two cases challenging President Joe Biden's authority to forgive federal student loans under a 2003 law called the HEROES Act.

MY Time Share

GWEN CULLEN

"We pass through time, we occupy space. We easily succumb to the illusion that the world of space is for our sake, for man's sake. In regard to time, we are immune to such an illusion."

—Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath*

I'm not getting back into the swing of things, post-pandemic peak. I've brought my bigger, boosted body to parties, to the office, to the theater. Nothing feels right. Time trips ungainly and shapeless. Before, the points and lines bounding my time were clear: blue morning by the coffee maker, rain or shine through leaking subway tunnels to my cubicle, Wednesday night dinner midtown with friends, Saturday morning diners for pancakes and a disgorgement of my week's grievances. It wasn't a very special shape, but it was a shape. What is this now? Sometimes going somewhere, if I am confident I haven't been exposed, if I'm not too sad or too lazy; most often at home, realizing in a panic before dinner I haven't left the apartment.

In elementary school, we made M.A.S.H. fortune-tellers. I remember the methodical snap snap of their beaks open and shut, me never able to game out the count to land on a mansion with my crush. But there was a lesson there, I think—life needs rhythm and shape. This past year can't be my future.

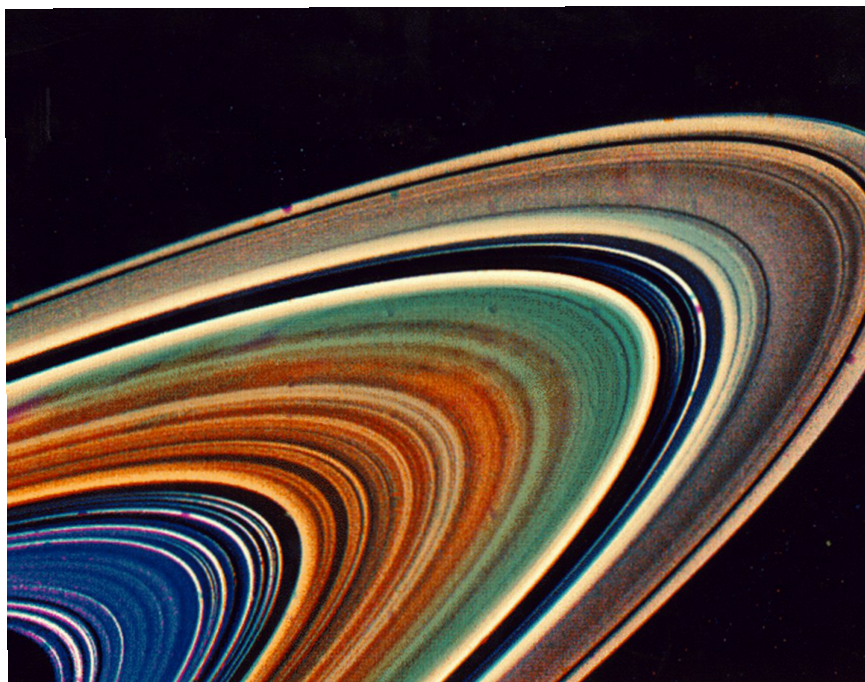
I adored my fifth grade teacher—when I think that she cannot have been as reed-elegant and beautiful as my memory makes her, I find a photo and see, oh, she was. Once, describing a Cather novel she loved, she proposed that there are books for certain seasons. I've tried to build my own liturgical calendar of books and always been too obvious: *Gatsby* a book for the waterlogged, erotic explosions of spring, *Macbeth* a warning to us all in the fall, the Russians for the cozy, dark of winter. But I'm a reader who rarely returns to books. Promiscuous attention and the anxious desire to accumulate achievements pull me away. And what if that's the problem with any potential order: they all require a discipline that just isn't in me anymore?

My husband wants to buy property with friends, join a little co-op in the woods. I hold the idea at arm's length. We could go there in the summer, he suggests. Our kids could all play together. The real concerns are logistical and financial, but I get lost trying to sketch a blueprint of what

the shape of the days would be. Wake early to garden before high sun, have my coffee as I take virtual meetings with my colleagues, evenings reading aloud to each other. The weekends would be special: paced by involved baking projects and the meandering plays kids write and hikes that I'd resent.

This is just the best parts of my own childhood, dipped in Edenic glaze. It seems unlikely that the perfect way to wrangle time would happen to be sinking back into it. But then, maybe it is. I might just need to stop overthinking it, stop bucking against life, the medium in which I swim. It is not surprising that a community might help. The task of living is obviously hard. I'm disorganized and lazy and then bristle at any instruction. Don't question the things that make it a little easier.

I spent my late teens bluffing that I would enter a convent, my early twenties reading about the Utopian experiments of America's communes. Now I watch too much Star Trek while I eat my dinner. It should be the abundance and alien marvels that I covet, but what if it's the uniforms, the duty roster, and the gentle dimming of LED light as I rest in my gray plastic pod-bed and shiny pajamas, hurtling through the vacuum of space so quickly that the stars, in reality each as giant as a god, are vague smears in the porthole?



Three incomplete scenarios:

1. (o1, o2)

.....

 and

o: _____
 o: _____ =

2.

∴∴∴ ( )
 ex

3.

5 spots (past tense)	5 spots (present tense)	5 spots (future tense)
.....ed		

?

BAG OF BONES

Which skeleton shall I wear? My closet's full of them.

One's sewed with embarrassment.
One's tailored with OCD.
This one's stitched with depression.
And this one's embroidered with anxiety.

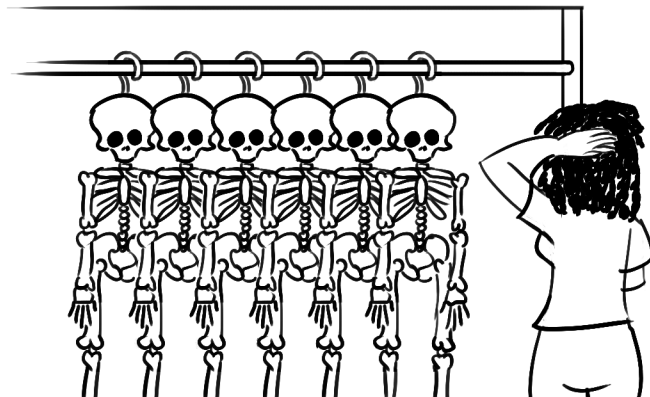
But there is one, waaaaay in the back.
Under my dirty clothes pile.
I dust off my oldest skeleton.
It's vintage; haven't seen it in a while.

Worn and beat up, the bones are brittle.
It's a little imperfect... ok, more than a little—
But every bone's grown beautifully.
I try it on and it still fits me perfectly.

This'll be the skeleton I wear today.
Baggage attached and all.
What'll the day bring?
I have no clue.

But this bag of bones will keep me standing tall.

By
A Shel Silverstein Wannabe



*i*ntercepted *correspondence*

Fr: Madison Law-Meyers <mlawmeyers@gmail.com {LEGACY}>

To: Rachel Brownstein <rachel.brownstein@mail {GMAIL_MIRROR}>

November 8, 2075

Re. Settle something?

No offense taken. And really, no need to take my prickliness seriously. My sense of humor never translated well to words.

Off the bat. Do you really think there's a typo in my book? I'm an editor by nature (and even got paid for it, a few times). I scrolled through the pages at 150%, word by word, pen poised to strike. Then I did it again. Then I uploaded all the edits and checked them a third time. That was almost twenty-five years ago. I was still using a regular tablet and editing manually in 2051. So naturally, I'm using clunky old email in 2075.

Does this seem important to you? My cohort thought technology was important for such a long time, and that the way we used it was important. I was born in the year 2000. People were very worried about us because we were the first children to grow up with smartphones in our hands. (How quaint that sounds now!) To be honest, I never quite fit the stereotype. My parents were older than most people with kids my age, and I was an only child. They monitored my screen time. I always had a penchant for classic tech and media. But I don't think the headlines considered the possibility that, for us, a smartphone was simply one more device in a world of devices; one that we could be unfazed by. The way my parents always had a refrigerator, I always had a hand-held object through which I could communicate. People were prefacing their arguments with "due to the rise of technology" for much longer than was really appropriate.

Though I guess I can't say I was truly *unfazed*. As a young adult, I would freak out about quitting the apps we used to call "social media," but still aggressively lurked after people I was interested in but too afraid to talk to. Looking back, it's funny that we judged ourselves and each other so harshly for how we interacted with our technology.

You're much younger than me. From your perspective, is it really true that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] changed everything? I'm skeptical. A lot of companies have "changed everything" in my time. But no one seems to cast aspersions on others about tech anymore. It's simply been... integrated, like everyone said it would be. I guess that's why people rag on us old "Gen Zers" for being unnecessarily self-conscious.

I'm content to sit in this sunroom, with its glass walls, and look out on the trees. I'm an old woman now. Truthfully, I don't mind being old. It was a relief to me when the sensationalist eyes of the storytellers turned their gaze away from my generation; the generation that was supposed to save the future. Now that we're in the future, we can rest.

-Madison

Promotions

Top Picks



Amazon.com

3:56 AM

Together we can defeat scams

logo Hello M, Our custome



Eric Adams defends love of 'vegan pizza' amid NYC wood and coal-fired oven...



Get Ahead

28m ago • 1,206 readers

Stressed? Take a day off, firms say

Use this sense to create stronger positive memories.

Get Hired

2h ago • 322 readers

'Love bombing' can be a job hunt red flag. Here's why.

Will salad subscriptions save lunch?

2h ago • 1,644 readers

Chipotle wins burrito-bowl battle

14h

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One of the subtler violences of colonialism is its obliteration of all stories and ways of knowing other than its own. By cutting enslaved and Indigenous people off from their land, their languages, and their rituals, ancestors, and gods, Western imperialism has presented itself as the only living history and therefore as the only possible future. We come to believe there is simply no alternative to Western values, technology, politics, and economics. (Even my students tell me it's more likely they'll live in a rotating corporate space pod than a just society on Earth.) But, to put it bluntly, there are all sorts of alternatives to Western technology, politics, and economics. The task, as Indigenous Futurism shows, is to recover the deliberately erased histories of colonized and oppressed peoples, sift through them to find the most life-giving stories, and bundle them together with the mess of the modern world to imagine new ways of being.

i promise, i'm different now

RACHEL CHOU

I'm seeing an old friend. My entire outfit is new. I'm at a coffee shop, I'm shaking my leg, and it's really warm outside. I cradle iced coffee between my hands and bite the plastic straw. I feel bad that I'm using a plastic straw. There's something soft playing on the radio but I'm not listening.

I see Freesia before she sees me. She's wearing a white floral dress with red flowers, her curly brown hair held back with barrettes. I prepare to tell her she looks the same as she did 12 years ago, since we graduated from high school. She looks around—I'm the only one in the cafe. We make eye contact.

"Freesia! You look great!" I stand up to give her a hug.

Freesia's brows furrow, as she moves away from me. "Hey," she says flatly.

"Do you want to sit over here?" I motion to my table.

"I'm here to meet an old friend from high school," she says.

I laugh, surprised. "Yeah, it's me, Hannah? I'm that friend from high school."

Freesia nods, then looks at her phone. She moves towards the barista to get a drink. I sit back down at my table in the corner. I'm feeling anxious.

When I remember Freesia, I think of crying over bad test scores, tamagotchis, matching shrinky-dink keychains, pretending to laugh really loudly in front of our lockers when a crush walked by, sharing the stained mirror in the second floor women's bathroom, the smell of frog carcasses from chemistry class, drawing with blue pen on each others ankles. We were in the same friend group but we barely hung out one-on-one. I knew nothing about her family. She was very focused on school. Junior year, she came back from winter break with cuts on her thighs, but no one asked her about it. Freesia kept things to herself, in the way that made you assume she didn't want to be asked.

When Freesia finishes paying for her drink, she sits at a table at the front of the restaurant in the opposite corner that I'm in. She keeps looking from her phone to the door. I walk over to her.

“Hey! Do you really not recognize me? I’m Hannah. We went to high school together, I swear.” I open up my phone and show her pictures from Facebook.

Freesia looks up at me. “You can’t be Hannah,” she says, pointing at my phone. “That isn’t you.”

I’m getting agitated at this point. I show her my driver’s license. “I swear I’m Hannah,” I say. “Remember senior year, when Taylor crashed that party and we all went and she threw up all over the walls of the bathroom and we all vowed to never drink alcohol again? And, and, we went to prom together. You, me, Amanda, Taylor, and Zoe. I had this incredibly poofy pink dress and you got your nails done—actually we all got them done at your aunt’s nail place?” I can’t believe she doesn’t remember me. “Is this a joke? Are you joking?”

“I’m not joking” she says.

“I texted you from my number. I’m just confused,” I say.

“If you’re Hannah, you’re a completely different person,” she says.

I’m trying to remember more anecdotes from high school, grasping desperately for memories, reaching into pockets I’ve tried to forget. “We had so many group projects together in chemistry class. We sat together at lunch, most days. People at school knew us by our friend group. We liked the same guy, what’s his name. Tyler. No, Sam! We both liked Sam. And you only liked him because I loved him. I had this enormous crush on him, but he didn’t want me. And you were there when my mom got cancer, and we went to that big rock in the state park and we smoked for the first time, and Zoe had to carry me home, and you, I remember you were crying about a boy.”

I stop. “I really loved you back then.”

Freesia looks at me blankly.

I smile. I get up.

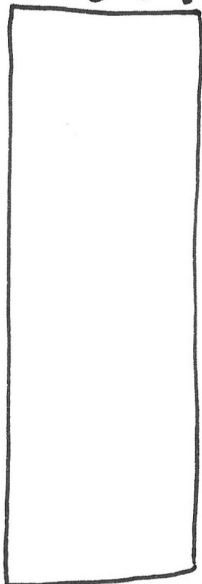
“It was nice to meet you. Hope you have a great day,” I say. And I leave.



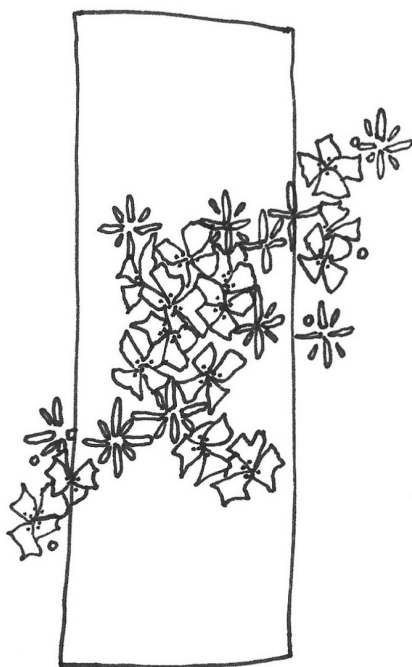
the future used to feel
wide open
like anything could happen
but the older I get
the more decisions I make
the narrower it starts to feel

THE WORK OF
A LIFETIME
I'VE LEARNED

IS NOT TO



FALL FOR



THAT ILLUSION

the unknown

MICHELLE LULIC

With mere weeks left in senior year, Middleton High was beginning the process of kicking out the class of 2004. Each student had a rite of passage: meeting with Mrs. Beverly, the school guidance counselor. Seventh period was my first step toward the freedom known as graduation. Yet that perspective didn't light the dim hall—or ease the dark pit that sat at the very mouth of my stomach.

As I walked closer to my fate, the smell seeping out of Room B01 exemplified the “B0.” Graduates who have since crossed over have also stated that the “1” was fitting for the office of a woman who appeared to be the very first faculty member to ever grace these hallowed halls.

I exhaled, grabbed the handle of the portal to my future, and eased the entirety of my body weight against the door until it creaked open. A sound quickly interrupted by Mrs. Beverly's already peeling lips. “Take a seat,” she snarled.

Tiny gold hoops held on for dear life as they entangled with the natural shaking of her gray curls. Her stare ordered me to the chair across from her. Dust dispersed the moment I sat down. I turned toward the window on my left for life support.

Outside, the lawnmowers passionately announced the return of spring. Inside, her daggered eyes pierced my skull. We all had to face the changing season.

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” she finally jabbed.

It was just as my older brother Tom described. She also dared him to decide his fate once. On a random afternoon in May.

The air grew tight around my lungs. I could blame it on the allergies, but I knew it was so much more. Mrs. Beverly knew it too. She bit down on what was left of her tattered lips. Waiting.

I tried to focus back on the lawnmowers. “Did you know that grass experiences pain when you cut it?” I smirked. Her stone cold expression hid her many wrinkles.

“That wonderful smell of spring you all love so much?” I continued, “is actually the biological response of each little blade of grass crying for help.”

She didn't glance out the window. Her eyes still hovered over me.

“But that doesn't fit our narrative now, does it?” I assure her, leaning in. An

uncomfortable clear of her throat manifests. Probably not allergies.

“Well, Delilah, that is... a very interesting fact. Have you thought about pursuing a career in the sciences?” Of course she found a way to circle back to that dreaded question.

Much like the grass, I can dream of growing as tall as I would like. But I’ve already learned that there’s always going to be a lawnmower that will come along to chop off my head.

“I guess you could say I’m thinking about my future. I’m thinking about my death,” I responded.

Suddenly Mrs. Beverly’s eyebrows revealed her wrinkles. Her knobby hands went to pick up the office phone and before I could sense my own reflexes my hand was holding hers. We’re both pinning the phone down onto the receiver.

“Have you ever thought about that, Mrs. Beverly?” I dared. Her second knobby hand then gently placed itself on top of mine. Her once stern eyes now pooled with a lifetime of unspoken words.

The lawnmowers outside ended their murderous run. I pulled my hands away.

“You know, Delilah. I’ve learned a few things during my time as a guidance counselor,” she croaked, “and I know fear when I see it.” Just like the freshly cut grass, Mrs. Beverly could smell me.

“I’m not scared of dying. Or getting older,” I challenged. “Or whatever it is that you think I might be scared of.”

“I know,” she replied. “You’re scared of living.”

There was silence again.

“That’s stupid,” I replied.

“You’re scared of the unknown.”

She was quiet again, until:

“So... what do you want to be when you grow up?”

“...I don’t... know.”

A smile emerged on Mrs. Beverly’s face that could only be likened to that of the Grinch. With that, just like Christmas, it was time for me to go away. I stood to charge out of the room when I was shaken by a voice I didn’t know she could fit inside her frail frame: “*Sit. Down.*”

I sat down. Dust.

“There’s nothing to be afraid of,” she continued.

How dare she tell me that.

“Is that what you told Tom?”

The lawnmowers started up again outside. Time for another death loop around the field.

“I remember your brother, Delilah,” she said in the same pitying voice I’d been hearing for the last three years. “He was different. He knew exactly what he wanted to do.”

“And how did that turn out for him?”

Dust. I head toward the door.

“He was a hero,” she stated.

Nothing I haven’t heard before.

“You don’t have to be afraid of what’s ahead,” said the woman who helped my brother enroll in the New York City Fire Department. “No one could have predicted what happened.”

No one could have predicted that in May 2000, Tom would have decided his fate. Right here in this very room.

After a moment, she continued to push: “What do you want to *do* with your life?”

That was the question: my life. What do I want to do with my whole entire life? In that moment, my brain suddenly handed me the answer I feared.

“I want to help people.”

Her eyes urged me to go on.

“But I don’t know how.”

She nodded, as if I actually answered her question. But, for me, I felt as confused as ever.

“You know better than anyone that dedicating your life to helping others can come with sacrifice,” she said. “Your brother knew that. And it didn’t sway his decision. There is nothing I could have said to him that would have changed his mind. He wanted to help people the only way he knew how. The way he wanted to.”

I remembered Tom’s toy fire truck from when we were kids. The way he helped our mom change the batteries in the smoke detectors. The smile on his face when he first put on his uniform.

“So how do you want to help?”

I remembered the way Tom smiled at me when I told him my stories.

Reclaim

they say time heals all wounds,
still i can't bring myself to visit
the best pizza place in Brooklyn - just yet.
holding onto a piece of that moment before we became strangers
but now with a looser grip.
if anything,
the future has proven that one day
i will be able to eat pizza again.





made with **affinity publisher 2** [a subscription-free alternative to indesign]

image sources:

saturday evening post, 4/20/1929

life magazine, 4/16/1951

the shadow magazine, 8/1/1933

the metropolitan museum of art, public domain archive

nasa + internet archive image collection

text sources:

elective affinities by j. w. von goethe

pirate enlightenment by david graeber

astrotopia by mary-jane rubenstein

how to print & bind this zine at home:

materials, programs, tools:

- 6 sheets of regular printer paper
- 3-4 new staples
- a pushpin, awl, or other tool to make a small hole
- adobe acrobat reader (free) or other PDF reader that can print in “booklet” mode
- optional: an x-acto knife, to trim the edges

instructions:

- open the zine PDF in acrobat. go to file > print. under “page sizing and handling,” choose “booklet.”
- the zine will appear to print in a jumbled-up way. take the sheets from the printer in exactly the order they were printed. if you fold the whole stack in half, you’ll notice that the pages are in order. don’t fold it yet, though!
- being careful to keep the sheets in order, fold each page individually (to get the best crease). you can use the blunt edge of a butter knife or a bone folder to crease it well.
- now we’re going to create the holes, where we’ll push in the staples to bind. you can be as precise as you like with this step; using a ruler to ensure that every staple is at an equal distance on every sheet, or just using the staples themselves as a measuring tool and eye-balling it. mark where the holes should go with a pencil. 3-4 staples along the crease should be enough.
- use a pushpin or awl to poke holes through each sheet. you can do this individually sheet-by-sheet, or use a binder clip to hold the sheets together and do them all at once.
- when all the holes are ready, align the holes of each sheet and press the staples through. feed the staples through the holes from the backs of the sheets, so that the prongs of the staple are on the inside of the crease. (the flat backs of the staples will be on the spine of your zine.)
- when staples are through all the sheets, use the blunt edge of a butter knife or a bone folder to fold down the prongs of each staple.
- fold the zine, and use the blunt edge on the spine crease a few times for good measure.
- optional: using a ruler and an x-acto knife, trim the uneven edges of the booklet.

